

Student Advice Service's

GUIDE ON THE EXAMINATION REVIEW PROCEDURE



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This information guide is for students who think that 'something irregular'[1] may have happened in the examination process and wish to submit a request to the University to reconsider their results to ensure that their circumstances have been considered by the examiners.

All undergraduate and postgraduate students who submitted an assessment that received marks which count towards their University of Cambridge award can submit an Examination Review. Details of the Examination Review Procedure can be accessed below:

https://www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/examination_review_procedure_-_march_2023.pdf.

Issues such as large amounts of external noise, a disturbance in the exam room or a mistake on the paper that affected your performance, as well as other types of issues, can be presented within 28 days of the Examination results becoming available. These issues can be raised via the Examination Review Procedure. Students can request a reconsideration of their examination results themselves but may wish to seek advice from their Tutor or the Student Advice Service.

[1] www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/examination-reviews

WHAT TYPE OF ISSUES CAN STUDENTS RAISE USING THE EXAMINATION REVIEW PROCEDURE?

This procedure can usually only investigate an irregularity that took place during the examination itself or during the examination marking process. Students can submit an Examination Review on the following specific grounds:

A procedural irregularity in the examination process that has adversely impacted the Candidate's Examination Results.

Generally, issues with the conduct of the examination or the marking process could be raised under this ground. For example, if during an examination, there were issues with large amounts of external noise, a disturbance in the exam room or a mistake on the paper that affected your performance.

Other examples could include approved reasonable adjustments not being followed or your viva examination was not conducted as described.

Examples of evidence would be:

- Letter confirming there was noise or a disturbance.
- Letter confirming there was a mistake on the paper.
- Evidence that the date for the viva was changed at the last minute or that you were not given reasonable time to prepare for the viva.
- Student Support Documents and description of the ways in which the reasonable adjustments were not adhered to.

Demonstrable bias or the perception of bias within the examination process.

For example, you have reasons to believe that the examiner was biased during the examination or in the marking process.

Bias or the perceptions of bias could be more challenging to evidence. In the absence of material evidence (a video, audio or written recording), you could present your case by providing a detailed account of your interaction with the examiner. This could be by describing their body posture, the language used and the tone of voice, or the examiners' written comments that could be interpreted as biased.

For students studying for certain postgraduate degrees - serious illness or other grave cause which has clearly impacted upon the examination itself and of which, for sufficient reason, the Examining Body were not aware.

These degrees are: B.D. Degree, Bus.D. Degree, M.D. Degree, Eng.D. Degree, Vet.M.D. Degree, M.Sc. Degree, Ph.D. Degree, M.Litt. Degree, Ph.D. Degree by special regulations, M.Phil. Degree by dissertation, Certificate of Postgraduate Study.

This ground applies only to students on the above-mentioned courses whose preparation for the examination and/or their performance in the examination was affected by illness or other grave cause. Grave cause, could, for example, be a family emergency such as bereavement or serious illness of a close family member.

The withdrawal of academic provision, which has had a demonstrable impact on the examination itself of which the Examining Board were not aware.

This ground may be used to raise concerns about your exam results that were impacted by Industrial Action.

This ground cannot be used to raise issues with the learning experience provided by the College or the University. If you are dissatisfied with the learning provision from your College you can raise a complaint through the College student complaints process. Please contact your College for details or speak with our Advisors who can help identify the correct process.

If you are unhappy with the learning provision you received from the University, you can submit a complaint through the Student Complaints Process. Details of the University Student Complaints Procedure can be accessed on the link below:

www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/student-complaints.

The University does not investigate complaints or reviews that challenge the academic judgement. The University defines academic judgement as 'the decision made by academic staff on the quality of the work itself or the criteria being applied to mark the work'

https://www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.u/files/examination_review_procedure_-_march_2023.pdf

If you feel that your situation does not fit any of these grounds, you can speak with our Advisors who can help you identify the correct process and explore your options.

WHAT TYPES OF EVIDENCE ARE THERE?

Medical evidence could be a letter from the GP, College Nurse, or any other relevant medical professional.

In line with University recommendations the supporting evidence should be:

Relevant - relating to the time in question.

Contemporary - produced close in time to the period affected.

Specific - where possible, it should explicitly relate to the impact the circumstances described have had on the examination.

Source: www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/mitigation.

The University recognises that there can sometimes be difficulties in obtaining medical evidence. If you are unable to provide the necessary medical evidence to support your application, you could provide any other evidence you might have available to support your case. For example, this could be:

- A statement/letter from your College Tutor or Nurse confirming the illness. You must have contacted them at the time of the illness occurring or as soon as possible afterwards.
- Students who suffer from a long-term illness and who are unable to provide the required medical evidence because they might be waiting for an appointment, could provide any other evidence they might have such as a referral letter.

Source: www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/mitigation.

Evidence of grave cause could be a death certificate confirming the passing of a family member or close friend; a doctor's letter or hospital admission to evidence special family circumstances which had an impact on the student's preparation and/or their performance during the examination.

Academic Evidence of good progress such as supervision reports may be useful. For relevant degree courses, the Postgraduate Committee might consult the Faculty Degree Committee regarding your academic progress to date and obtain a profile of your marks for the examination and any other formally assessed work completed throughout the year.

A Student Support Document (SSD) to illustrate the recommendations you have that the Examiners should consider and follow during the assessment process.

Other evidence could be your Student Course Handbook, the Code of Practice for Research Students and the Code of Practice for Master's Students that set out expectations for both students, the Supervisory team, and Examiners in the conduct of the examination.

You can access the Code of Practice for Research Students here:

www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/grad-code-of-practice/code-practice-research-students.

The Code of Practice for Master's students can be accessed here:

www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/grad-code-of-practice/code-practice-masters-students.

WHAT IF I DO NOT HAVE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT MY CASE?

Medical Evidence

If medical issues affected your exams and you did not seek medical support at the time, post hoc evidence is better than no evidence. You could explain the situation to your health professional (how you were feeling, when and what impact this had on your exams) and ask them to write a letter. It would be helpful if in the letter the doctor offered their professional opinion that your experience would have had an impact on your studies.

Evidence of Grave Cause

If you do not have evidence to support the actual 'grave cause' (e.g. death certificate, hospitalisation of a loved one, increased caring responsibilities), consider speaking to a health professional about what impact this had on your exams. The health professional may be able to write a letter of support on the impact the grave cause has had on your physical and/or mental health. A letter from your Tutor may also be helpful to confirm, for example, that you had increased caring responsibilities during the examination period.

Academic Evidence

For those students who would be applying to mitigate their personal circumstances (e.g. illness), supervision reports and previous examinations/assessments would probably form the bulk of the evidence. Consider asking supervisors or other academics you work with to provide letters of support. You can also use emails you may have received from these individuals about the quality of your work.

For those students who would be applying on grounds of irregularities, bias or the withdrawal of academic provision, evidence of good progress such as supervision reports may be useful.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Once you have identified that your concerns can be raised using this process, you can submit an Examination Review within 28 days of receiving your formal examination results. Students are expected to adhere to this timeframe. Although, if you had good reasons for delaying the submission, you can explain this in the Examination Review Form and provide supporting evidence. The University will assess each case individually. Reasons that might be accepted for submitting a late application are, but are not limited to, illness or a family emergency. Seeking advice and not having known the correct process are not usually valid reasons.

The application should include:

- A completed and signed application form. You can download the form by accessing this link: www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/examination-reviews. The form is on the right-hand side of the page entitled 'Examination Review Form - formal results issued'.
- Supporting evidence where this is available.
- A copy of your Student Support Document (SSD) if you require reasonable adjustments during the process or if the submission deadline was extended in line with recommendations made on the SSD.

WHAT WOULD THE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES BE?

The application is successful and some of the possible recommendations could be:

- For students on the following degrees: B.D, M.D, Vet.M.D, Ph.D., Bus.D, Eng.D, M.Sc, M.Litt, M.Phil. Degree by dissertation or Certificate of Postgraduate Study - refer the matter to the Postgraduate Committee for reconsideration.
- To require the Examiners to examine or re-examine the Candidate.
- To require new Examiners to re-examine the Candidate.
- To permit the Candidate to submit a revised dissertation or other assessment.
- To require one or more additional Examiners to make an independent report or reports on the work submitted by the Candidate.
- To require Examining Body to set the Candidate new examination papers or other assessments.

If your case does not fall within the remit of the Exam Review procedure, the whole or part of the request can be referred to an alternative procedure.

If this was to occur, you would receive information from the Case Handler about which procedure would be more appropriate to consider your request and how to access that process. Students are encouraged to engage with these processes independently and adhere to the University's timescales. For example, if part or the whole request could be investigated under the student complaints procedure, you would be expected to submit the complaint within the required deadline.

The request is ineligible to be investigated under the procedure.

If you disagree with the decision, you can submit a review of the decision within 7 calendar days. The review is considered by the Head of Office for Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals (OSCCA) and if the initial decision is upheld, you will receive a Completion of Procedures Letter which you can use to submit a complaint to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator](#) (OIA). The OIA is the ombudsman for higher education establishments and the University of Cambridge subscribes to their scheme.

IF I AM UNHAPPY WITH THE OUTCOME, CAN I REVIEW THE DECISION?

If you are unsatisfied with the outcome and reasons behind the decision, you can request a review of this decision on the following grounds:

- Procedural irregularities that occurred during the reconsideration which were material or potentially material to the decision being reached.
- The decision is unreasonable in that, in that no reasonable person or body could have reached the same decision on the available evidence.
- The availability of new evidence, which materially impacts the decision and which, for valid reasons, could not have been submitted at an earlier stage.

Requests for reviews of the decision need to be submitted within 14 days of the formal decision being communicated to you. Further information on how to submit a review along with the appropriate form will be provided with your formal decision letter.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM UNSATISFIED WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE REVIEW OF THE DECISION?

If you are unsatisfied with the outcome and reasons behind the decision, you can make a representation to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). To do this, you will need a Completion of Procedures letter (COP) from the University.

Deadline: 1 year of the formal decision being issued

To access our resources or to ask for help please visit our website:
<https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/advice/information/exams/>

OTHER RESOURCES

University of Cambridge Examination Review Procedure:
www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/examination-reviews

Cambridge Students - Mitigation:
www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/mitigation

University of Cambridge Student Complaints:
www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/student-complaints